

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, ECIN, MARR, PP
SUBJECT: PAPUA NEW GUINEA FOREIGN POLICY

1. SUMMARY: THERE FOLLOWS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF CABLES DESCRIBING PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN SOME DETAIL. INASMUCH AS PNG HAS BEEN INDEPENDENT LESS THAN THREE YEARS AND IS LITTLE KNOWN TO MOST WASHINGTON END-USERS, THIS INITIAL CABLE OUTLINES THE BASES FOR PNG FOREIGN POLICY, HOW IT IS FORMULATED AND ITS BASIC THRUST. END SUMMARY.

2. PAPUA NEW GUINEAN FOREIGN POLICY IS OF NECESSITY A CREATURE OF A FEW KEY LEADERS AND FOREIGN MINISTRY PROFESSIONALS. ALTHOUGH A DEMOCRATIC STATE, PNG LACKS THE SOCIETAL AND COMMUNICATIONS BASE ON WHICH A NATIONAL CONSENSUS MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED. THIS IS AN EXTREMELY HETEROGENEOUS NATION WHOSE PEOPLE ARE PRIMARILY ILLITERATE, SOME ONLY A GENERATION OUT OF THE STONE AGE, AND MOST STILL HAVE LITTLE COMMUNICATION WITH OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD. IN TIME, EDUCATION WILL HELP BUT A GREAT LEAP FORWARD IN COMMUNICATIONS WOULD HAVE TO PRECEED DEVELOPMENT OF AN
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INFORMED POPULACE CAPABLE OF CONTRIBUTING MEANINGFULLY TO A NATIONAL CONSENSUS ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. AT PRESENT, THERE IS BUT ONE DAILY NEWSPAPER, A SMALL CIRCULATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER IN THE CAPITAL, ONE GOVERNMENT-OPERATED RADIO NETWORK AND NO TELEVISION.

3. PARLIAMENTARIANS REFLECT THEIR LOCAL, DIVERSE SOCIETIES BUT

MOST HAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE INFLUENCE OVER FOREIGN AFFAIRS. DEBATES ON SUCH MATTERS ARE FEW: FOREIGN POLICY BASICALLY IS LEFT TO THE PRIME MINISTER, A FEW OTHER KEY MINISTERS, AND PROFESSIONALS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE. SOME FOREIGN AFFAIRS MATTERS ARE BROUGHT TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CABINET), LARGELY TREATIES AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS (A CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT) AND MATTERS CALLING FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS. CABINET DISCUSSIONS ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS ARE INFREQUENT.

4. BASICALLY, PNG FOREIGN POLICY IS THAT SET FORTH SOME YEARS AGO BY MICHAEL SOMARE AND A SMALL GROUP OF PANGU POLITICIANS WHO LED PNG TO INDEPENDENCE. AS CHIEF MINISTER, SOMARE, ON FEBRUARY 27, 1973, PRESENTED A STATEMENT OF NATIONAL AIMS TO THE ASSEMBLY. HIS EIGHT POINT PLAN, AS IT WAS KNOWN, WAS FOLLOWED IN JUNE 1974 BY A STATEMENT ON "THE EMERGING ROLE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA IN WORLD AFFAIRS" WHICH, ALTHOUGH AMPLIFIED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THEREAFTER, HAS NOT CHANGED A GREAT DEAL. SUCCINCTLY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S FOREIGN POLICY IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- A) UNIVERSALISM
 - B) INVOLVEMENT BUT NOT ALIGNMENT
 - C) NATION-BUILDING THE FIRST PRIORITY
 - D) ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS
 - E) REGIONAL SOLIDARITY
 - F) SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PACIFIC TERRITORIES
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- G) A WELCOME FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT, BUT ONLY THAT WHICH BENEFITS PNG'S PEOPLE
- H) A WELCOME TO FOREIGN AID BUT TO AID DIRECTED TO PNG'S NEEDS AND PRIORITIES AS DECIDED BY GPNG
- I) DIVERSIFICATION OF TYPES AND NATIONAL ORIGIN OF INVESTMENT AND ASSISTANCE
- J) ABHORRENCE OF RACISM
- K) INCREASING SELF-RELIANCE

5. EVEN THOUGH THE BASIC THRUST OF ENUNCIATED POLICY HAS NOT CHANGED, TIME HAS BROUGHT SLOW EVOLUTION AND FURTHER REFINEMENT. SEPTELS TO FOLLOW WILL COVER CURRENT GPNG FOREIGN POLICY ON WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES.

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NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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